

Substance Abuse Relapse Prevention for Older Adults A Group Treatment Approach¹

LINK: <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA05-4053/SMA05-4053.pdf>

This manual authored by Drs. Larry W. Dupree and Lawrence Schonfeld presents a relapse-prevention approach that uses the cognitive-behavioral and self-management intervention in a counselor-led treatment setting to help individuals overcome substance use disorders.

- The manual can be downloaded at no cost to anyone accessing the above SAMHSA website.
- While the exercises and examples are aimed at an older adult population, the approach is easily adapted for any age population.

Using the Manual for Brief Treatment

SBIRT is a national initiative for addressing risky and problematic use of alcohol, illicit substances, and medications in a variety of populations.

- Individuals who screen positive for such problems are formally assessed.
- For those assessed at mild to moderate risk, Brief Intervention is offered, often in one brief session (e.g., 20 minutes) delivering feedback about the screening results and using motivational interviewing approaches to encourage the individual to change his/her substance use behavior.
- For those assessed at moderate to high risk, Brief Treatment can be offered over one or more sessions. Brief Treatment also involves motivational strategies, but provides more in-depth assessment and education as well as skills training, problem solving, and coping strategies designed to prevent harm.
- Individuals at highest risk (e.g., substance dependence) receive referral to treatment to formal substance abuse treatment programs.

This manual provides a curriculum for individuals entering formal treatment.

- The methods have been used in Florida and other states.²⁻⁶
- Minimal requirements for counselors using this manual are provided in Section III.
- As part of the SBIRT, this manual is a way to provide structured Brief Treatment.
- The curriculum can be used in either:
 - individual sessions
 - group treatment

A Three Stage Approach

There are three stages to the relapse prevention approach describe in this manual:

- (1) Assess and identify the components of the person's substance use behavior chain as described on Pages 22 – 25, using the structured interview called the Substance Abuse Profile for the Elderly (SAPE) (appendix A). The results of SAPE are used to identify the client's antecedents and consequences of substance use on a typical day of drinking or drug use. The recorded answers are used to compose the person's substance use behavior chain.
- (2) Teach the person to understand and be aware of the components of his/her behavior chain. This uses the "A-B-C" approach (Antecedents-Behavior-Consequences) on Pages 35-84. The components describe the high risk situations unique to each individual. These are taught in an A-B-C "Module." Individuals are taught to keep a weekly log of their substance use, urges, and whether they did or did not use substances following an urge to use.
- (3) Teach skills necessary to avoid a lapse or relapse. These are taught in individual modules that offer session-by-session, word-by-word curriculum for the most common high risk situations. Modules include strategies, lecture content, and exercises (behavior rehearsals, role plays, quizzes, and homework) to demonstrate learning of the new skills. The modules (Pages 85-181) include:
 - a. Situations: Social pressure
 - b. Situations: Home and Alone
 - c. Negative Thoughts and Emotions
 - d. Anxiety and Tension
 - e. Anger and Frustration
 - f. Substance Cues
 - g. Coping with Urges/Self-statements
 - h. Preventing a Slip from Becoming a Relapse

Adapting the Manual to an SBIRT Approach

Given the brevity of a typical SBIRT service, even for brief treatment and brief therapy, it is recommend that the SAPE be administered, the chain developed, a copy provided to the client, and that the module most pertinent to the highest risk situation be administered.

References

1. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. *Substance abuse relapse prevention for older adults: A group treatment approach*. In: DHHS, ed. Rockville MD: Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; 2005.
2. Dupree LW, Broskowski H, Schonfeld L. The Gerontology Alcohol Project: A behavioral treatment program for elderly alcohol abusers. *The Gerontologist* 1984;24:510-516.
3. Schonfeld L, Hazlett, R., Hedgecock, Burns, L.V., Duchene, D., Gum, A.M. Screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment for older adults with substance misuse. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2014:e1-e7, Published online ahead of print May 15, 2014.
4. Schonfeld L, Dupree LW, Dickson-Fuhrmann E, et al. Cognitive-behavioral treatment of older veterans with substance abuse problems. *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Neurology*. 2000;13(3):124-129.
5. Schonfeld L, King-Kallimanis BL, Duchene DM, et al. Screening and brief intervention for substance misuse among older adults: the Florida BRITE project. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2010;100(1):108-114.
6. Outlaw FH, Marquart JM, Roy A, et al. Treatment Outcomes for Older Adults Who Abuse Substances. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*. February 1, 2012;31(1):78-100.